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Chair: Mr. Rosenthal ..... (Guatemala)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 129: Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 (*continued*)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (A/65/531 and A/65/593)

1. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revised proposal for the use of regular budget resources for the normative support functions of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) (A/65/531), said that the revised proposal concerned the use of regular budget resources approved for the biennium 2010-2011 and that the report included an organizational chart of the Entity and options for administrative arrangements for its regular budget. It set out the necessary programmatic changes and the resources required for their implementation. In accordance with established practice, the report also contained summary information on the extrabudgetary resources of the new Entity.

2. The revised estimates mainly reflected the transfer of subprogramme 2, Gender issues and advancement of women, from section 9, Economic and social affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 to a new budget section 37, UN Women. The Entity's programme of work included two subprogrammes and reflected the existing expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement, together with five additional expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement to reflect additional outputs to be implemented using extrabudgetary resources as a result of the addition of activities and resources from the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

3. The total proposed appropriation for 2011 under section 37 was $6,983,500, reflecting the transfer of $6,615,700 from section 9 and an additional appropriation of $367,800 to finance the establishment of three new posts. The initial appropriation for section 9 approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/244 A would be reduced accordingly from $166,217,100 to $159,601,400.

4. With respect to extrabudgetary resources, it was proposed that the amount of $1,322,200, representing the extrabudgetary resources for 2011 under subprogramme 2 of section 9, should be transferred to section 37, together with the estimated 2011 part of INSTRAW and UNIFEM resources in the amount of $132,768,000. Additional voluntary contributions of $359,866,300 were projected for 2011, bringing total extrabudgetary resources for the year to $493,956,400.

5. With respect to posts 42 posts — 28 Professional and above and 14 General Service to be redeployed from section 9 to section 37 would continue to be funded under the regular budget. An additional 3 posts — 1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 D-2 and 1 General Service — were also proposed. In anticipation of the growth in voluntary funding, the 2011 post complement under extrabudgetary resources was expected to increase from 94 to 368 posts.

6. To allow the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) to review the programmatic aspects of the new and revised mandates of UN Women and any differences between the biennial programme plan and the programmatic aspects of the proposed programme budget, the relevant documents would be submitted to the General Assembly through CPC in the context of the submission of the consolidated changes to the biennial plans for the periods 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. Specifically, the revisions to the approved biennial plan for the period 2010-2011 resulting from the elimination of the 2011 part of subprogramme 2 from section 9, as well as from the new narrative under section 37, would be submitted to CPC ex post facto at its July 2011 session. In addition, the biennial plan for the period 2012-2013 reflecting the full elimination of subprogramme 2 from section 9 and the introduction of the new programme for UN Women would be submitted to CPC during that session.

7. In response to the General Assembly's request in its resolution 64/289, two options concerning the administrative arrangements for the regular budget of UN Women were presented. Given the hybrid nature of the new Entity, option 1 was the preferred approach. Under that option, regular budget resources would be provided to UN Women in the form of a grant, which it would administer and disburse in accordance with its own financial regulations and rules and using its own enterprise resource planning system. Financial statements and related accounts would be submitted to the Board of Auditors in accordance with established procedures.

8. The grant modality had been used for a number of years for the implementation of the budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The budget process would remain unchanged except with regard to implementation. The General Assembly would thus maintain control of programme structure and performance, activities and outputs, and post and non-post resources funded from the regular budget.

9. **Ms. Bachelet** (Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) said that UN Women would not only function as a secretariat supporting intergovernmental normative work but also carry out operational activities at the country level in order to ensure that action at that level was commensurate with global goals and commitments for gender equality and women's empowerment. Member States and civil society had high expectations of the Entity, given their concerns about the persistent discrimination, marginalization and exclusion faced by many women and girls around the world.

10. The High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, held in September 2010, had taken place against a backdrop of slow progress in the gender equality dimensions of the Goals. What was lacking, in areas such as education and maternal mortality, was political will and the allocation of sufficient resources at the country level. If UN Women fulfilled its mission, women would no longer die in childbirth in such high numbers, rape would not be acceptable as a weapon of war and the economic potential of half a country's workforce would not be wasted due to lack of education.

11. The General Assembly had established UN Women by uniting the mandates and assets of four existing entities. UN Women would ensure more effective and coherent gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system and would provide better support to Member States. The budget proposal currently before the Committee focused on the regular budget resources for UN Women; a second proposal, on voluntary resources, would be submitted to the new Executive Board through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in January 2011. Together, the two submissions would establish the new organizational structure of UN Women and put in place the minimum capacities needed to meet the requirements set out in General Assembly resolution 64/289. She was currently preparing a strategic vision and plan for the new Entity, to be submitted to the Board in June 2011. In the interim, ongoing activities must continue: Member States expected UN Women to be fully formed and ready for action on 1 January 2011.

12. Cost savings and economies of scale from the merger of the four entities had already been identified and further efficiencies would no doubt follow. UN Women would also have new functions and mandates, with an Executive Director at the level of Under-Secretary-General and a leading role in the United Nations system for coordinating action on gender equality at the global, regional and country levels. It was also expected to have increased capacity to respond to requests for support from national partners. The budget submission proposed the use of all existing posts funded from both regular budget and extrabudgetary resources to perform those functions; increased regular budget resources would nevertheless be required to fund the Under-Secretary-General post, a D-2 Chief of Staff and a General Service support post.

13. The provision of regular budget resources in the form of a grant, following the precedent of UNHCR, would ensure that intergovernmental bodies retained the authority to review and approve the regular budget portion of UN Women funding and to review expenditures. UN Women could then administer all its resources using an integrated resource management system and avoid the management and fiduciary risk associated with maintaining two financial and human resources systems. The second option would be to request the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to administer the regular budget portion of UN Women resources. Since that would probably be done on a reimbursable basis, it would require additional funds. Option 2 would effectively reverse the Assembly's intent in creating UN Women, since it would maintain the separation of staff performing normative and operational support functions rather than establishing a single Entity with a clear identity and strong esprit de corps. The grant modality, in contrast, would ensure that the Assembly maintained control over the regular budget funding of normative support activities while allowing UN Women to work as a cohesive entity.

14. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/65/593), said that the establishment of UN Women would strengthen the Organization's capacity to meet the increasing demand

for United Nations system support to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. She commended the Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and her team for the progress accomplished in consolidating the mandates and functions of the four pre-existing entities.

15. The Advisory Committee was currently reviewing the proposal on the use of voluntary resources for UN Women, which would be considered by the Executive Board in 2011; accordingly, it had made only general comments on the future role and functions of UN Women, which were set out in chapter II of its report. UN Women must avoid overlaps with the mandates of other United Nations entities and Secretariat offices and departments working on similar issues. It should adopt a prudent approach to managing its future growth and should pursue all available opportunities for efficiencies and economies of scale. The Entity's final organizational structure should reflect a thorough review of staffing requirements in the field and at Headquarters, and all opportunities for rationalizing the post structure should be explored during the process of consolidating and modifying the institutional arrangements.

16. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the grant modality option for the implementation of the regular budget portion of UN Women funding, which represented the most practical approach for a hybrid entity and would ensure maximum transparency in the administration of regular budget resources. There should be no weakening of the requirement for detailed reporting to the Assembly on the utilization of those resources.

17. Chapter IV of the report contained detailed comments on the proposal for a new budget section covering the financing of the normative and analytical activities of UN Women. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly should approve the proposals for the creation of the new budget section and the establishment of three new posts.

18. **Mr. Al-Shahari** (Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he welcomed the appointment of Ms. Bachelet, a woman from the developing world, as the first head of UN Women. The Group and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, through the Joint Coordinating Committee, had played an active role in the process that had led to the establishment of the new Entity, with the aim of institutionalizing such concepts as universality, national ownership and equitable geographical representation. UN Women should fully reflect the principle of universality by including all regions and countries in its organizational structure.

19. He trusted that the incorporation of INSTRAW into UN Women would enhance the impact of the Institute's global training and research aimed at achieving the empowerment of women and gender equality worldwide. The Institute's experience and programmes, as well as the convenient geographical location and low operational costs of its facilities in the Dominican Republic, would lend themselves to that endeavour.

20. The Group was concerned that, under the Secretary-General's proposal, only 1.4 per cent of the total estimated budget of $500 million for UN Women would be financed under the regular budget. It was especially troubling that some of the senior posts at the Assistant Secretary-General and Director levels were to be funded through voluntary contributions. Because they involved strategic functions, such posts should be funded through assessed contributions. The share of such contributions should be increased in order to ensure predictable and transparent financing for the new Entity. Moreover, overreliance on voluntary contributions might change the focus of UN Women activities, making it donor-driven and thus distancing it from the priorities agreed by the General Assembly.

21. The Group supported the use of the grant modality for the implementation of the regular budget portion of UN Women funding. It was crucial to maintain the current process for review and approval of post and non-post resources by the Assembly and to follow the established procedure for review of the strategic framework by CPC.

22. Equitable geographical distribution was of fundamental importance in the filling of all posts and positions, including in the Office of the Executive Director, with a view to improving the participation of nationals of developing countries, particularly in senior posts.

23. **Mr. Grauls** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova

and Ukraine, said that UN Women, a new landmark in United Nations reform, would be the keystone of the Organization's activities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

24. All administrative arrangements for the management of UN Women should be in place by the time it became operational on 1 January 2011. Steps should be taken from the outset to avoid overlaps with the mandates of other United Nations entities and Secretariat offices and departments dealing with similar issues.

25. The European Union supported the use of the grant modality for the implementation of the regular budget resources of UN Women. That modality, which had been used successfully by UNHCR for a number of years, would ensure the efficient and transparent administration of those resources.

26. **Mr. Errázuriz** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the establishment of UN Women afforded a historic opportunity for gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system. The Group welcomed the appointment of Ms. Bachelet, a woman from the Latin American region, as Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; under her guidance, the new Entity would be an important tool for combating gender inequality and discrimination against women. Her effective management of the integration of the mandates and functions of the four entities to be incorporated into UN Women would improve coordination and coherence in the United Nations response to gender-based discrimination. He trusted that, after the initial transition period, INSTRAW would continue to provide global research and training from its facilities in the Dominican Republic, drawing on the value added by its experience, programmes, convenient location and low costs.

27. Strict adherence to the principles underlying the establishment of the new Entity, as set out in General Assembly resolution 64/289, was fundamental. The principle of universality — ensuring that UN Women effectively met the gender equality needs of all regions and countries — was particularly important. The principle of equitable geographical distribution should also be duly applied when filling posts, particularly in senior management.

28. UN Women should be given the necessary resources to fulfil its mandates so that it could fulfil the high hopes being placed in it. Senior management posts should be funded from the regular budget rather than from voluntary contributions to avoid interference in the selection of senior staff. The new Entity should promote coordination with all United Nations bodies, avoid duplication, make the best possible use of human and financial resources and identify possible shortcomings in the management of those resources.

29. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Mexico) said that his delegation concurred with recent comments by the Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women regarding the need for the new Entity to add value by providing stronger leadership and better coordination on gender issues throughout the United Nations system, rather than constituting merely the sum of its predecessors. The new Under-Secretary-General's appointment represented a major opportunity for the Organization: in view of her international stature and track record in the area of gender equality, his delegation was convinced that UN Women would perform its functions effectively and efficiently under her leadership.

30. His delegation favoured the integrated administration of the Entity's resources and the use of a grant modality for implementation of the regular budget component. The Secretary-General's current proposal should, however, be viewed merely as a starting point, on the basis of which further budget projections would be prepared after the Entity had become fully operational in January 2011. It was essential that UN Women should have the necessary resources at all times to operate fully and implement its mandate; his delegation would therefore carefully consider any future requests for additional resources.

31. His delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee that a prudent approach should be taken in considering the new Entity's structure and resource requirements, both financial and human, with a view to minimizing overlap and duplication of functions. Mexico would continue to play an active role in all United Nations forums addressing gender issues and would support the work of UN Women as a member of its Executive Board.

32. **Mr. Shin** Boo-nam (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation, which had long supported efforts to eliminate discrimination against women, achieve gender equality and empower women around the world, was fully committed to the goal of greater

system-wide coherence in pursuit of those aims. Bearing in mind that UN Women had not only assumed the mandates and functions of the four existing United Nations gender entities, but was a dynamic entity in its own right with the important role of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment, and given that it was likely to require significant net increases in human and financial resources in the near future, its success was clearly dependent on the support provided by Member States. That said, the new Entity should continue to pursue all available opportunities for efficiencies and economies of scale.

33. **Mr. Marafi** (Kuwait) said that the establishment of UN Women represented a historic opportunity for Member States to increase their support for all activities promoting gender equality. Kuwait would support the work of the new Entity, which should prove more effective than the previous United Nations gender entities in achieving women's empowerment and gender equality, and trusted that the new mechanism would provide greater assistance to Governments in their efforts towards those ends.

34. The role of women in Kuwaiti society had been strengthened; women were now able to participate in the country's political and social life and assume high-ranking positions in the Government. His delegation hoped that continued cooperation with the United Nations would further advance the situation of women and enable them to become full partners in society, in response to one of the most important of the Millennium Development Goals.

35. **Mr. Abdullah** (Malaysia) said that his delegation fully supported the work of UN Women. While significant progress had already been made towards gender equality and women's empowerment, through landmark agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, many challenges and obstacles still needed to be addressed. As a member of the UN Women Executive Board, his delegation would further strengthen its efforts and contribute to the Entity's work in meeting the needs of women and girls worldwide.

36. His delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee that the final organizational structure of UN Women should reflect a thorough review of staffing requirements, both in the field and at Headquarters, and underlined the importance of transparency in that regard. It supported the transfer of $6.6 million from section 9 of the programme budget for 2010-2011 to a newly created budget section 37, UN Women, effective 1 January 2011, and noted the appropriation of $7 million under the said section 37, including an amount for the establishment of three new posts. It was vital that UN Women should have the necessary resources to carry out its mandates effectively.

37. **Mr. Cuello Camilo** (Dominican Republic), welcoming the Secretary-General's decision to appoint the former President of Chile as the Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, said that the Dominican Republic had a long tradition of fighting for gender equality, the rights of women and their empowerment. Recalling that INSTRAW had its headquarters in Santo Domingo, his delegation trusted that the Institute's wealth of knowledge and experience would be fully utilized by UN Women and that its highly professional and qualified staff would be incorporated into the United Nations workforce.

38. As a member of the UN Women Executive Board for the next three years, the Dominican Republic would make every effort to promote gender equality, achieve zero tolerance for violence against women and girls, and ensure that UN Women fulfilled all the mandates assigned to it by the General Assembly. In that connection, it would work to ensure that all the mandates of the four previously existing United Nations gender entities were fully integrated into the new architecture and implemented with due respect for geographical balance. The Dominican Republic would also make every effort to contribute financially to the new Entity, despite its current severe economic adjustment programme. It hoped that UN Women would raise the profile of gender issues on the international stage, and so help to eradicate the suffering, humiliation and inequality still faced by women in many parts of the world.

39. **Mr. Benmoussa** (Morocco) said that the establishment of UN Women represented a significant step forward, for both the international community and the United Nations, in terms of increasing the coherence of the actions taken to promote women's rights and improve their living conditions worldwide.

While the new Entity had a challenging mandate that required it to conduct operational activities in different countries and regions, which would necessitate major mobilization and coordination among the various stakeholders, the leadership it would provide would undoubtedly advance the United Nations agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment.

40. His delegation supported the financing of UN Women through regular budget resources and voluntary contributions. However, it was concerned that funding from the regular budget would account for only about 1.4 per cent of the total 2011 resources for UN Women. Any shortage of voluntary contributions could hinder the Entity's work. With regard to the administrative arrangements for the regular budget resources, the General Assembly should approve option 1 as a means of ensuring efficiency and transparency.

41. Over the last 10 years, the Moroccan Government had implemented a number of reforms aimed at empowering women, ensuring gender equality, preventing violence against women, protecting their rights and enhancing their role in Moroccan society.

42. **Mr. Lieberman** (United States of America), recalling that efforts to improve the situation of women and children worldwide contributed more broadly to the development, security and prosperity of their communities, said that the creation of the new Entity represented more than just a reform of the United Nations system. As the Advisory Committee had stated, the establishment of UN Women was an important part of the Organization's ongoing efforts to strengthen its capacity to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, in particular the increasing demand for United Nations system support to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

43. His delegation strongly supported the Secretary-General's post and resource proposals, as endorsed by the Advisory Committee, and was in favour of funding option 1, which would allow for the integrated administration of all resources and would enable UN Women to operate effectively as a hybrid entity with two separate funding sources for normative and operational activities. It also concurred with the Advisory Committee that efforts should be made to achieve efficiencies and streamline functions in the transition and start-up phase.

44. **Ms. Dunlop** (Brazil), affirming her delegation's full support for the Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, said it was vital that the new Entity's operational activities should be guided by the principle of universality, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/289. UN Women should be able to offer support to all countries, both developed and developing, in their efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

45. With regard to the funding of normative functions, her delegation was strongly in favour of increasing the share of regular budget resources to ensure that UN Women had the predictable and transparent financing it needed to meet the high expectations raised by its establishment. It was a matter of concern that funding from assessed contributions was expected to account for only about 1.4 per cent of the Entity's total 2011 resources. The posts at the Assistant Secretary-General and Director levels included in the proposed structure of UN Women, and the corresponding non-post expenditures, should be funded from the regular budget rather than from extrabudgetary resources, owing to their strategic importance and the nature of their mandate.

46. Bearing in mind the importance of maintaining the normal budget review, approval and reporting processes for the new Entity, so as to preserve the General Assembly's control of post and non-post resources and to ensure maximum transparency in the administration of regular budget resources, her delegation supported the Secretary-General's proposal to use the grant modality. It also recalled that CPC would review the changes to the 2010-2011 strategic framework that had resulted from the establishment of UN Women.

47. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/289, the new Entity should harmonize its business practices with those of other United Nations organizations engaged in operational activities, especially in relation to conditions of service in the field and at Headquarters, under the auspices of the International Civil Service Commission. It was also important to guarantee equitable geographical distribution and gender balance of staff, especially as a way to ensure that nationals of developing countries were represented at senior levels. Lastly, Member States needed to show active leadership and make available the necessary resources to ensure that the new Entity lived up to expectations.

48. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan) said that his delegation welcomed the progress that UN Women had made to date, particularly with regard to the timely preparation of its estimated resource requirements under the regular budget. Japan would support the Entity's efforts to successfully complete its transition period, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/289, and become fully operational by 1 January 2011. Efforts to increase efficiency were vital in order to ensure that the Entity's work led to more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system. His delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee that, despite stakeholders' high expectations for the new Entity, UN Women should take a prudent approach to managing its growth and pursue economies of scale where possible.

49. **Mr. Puri** (India) said that the establishment of UN Women was a transformational reform initiative that consolidated the Organization's work in the crucial area of gender equality and women's empowerment. India, whose population included more than 500 million women, was unwaveringly committed to the objectives of UN Women. Gender equality and affirmative action to ensure women's empowerment were a key national priority enshrined in the country's Constitution and were the focus of many important socio-economic programmes and policies.

50. The early operationalization of the new Entity was a matter of high priority. It was vital to ensure that UN Women was equipped with adequate resources to complete the transition period smoothly and become a fully effective and functional body able to meet the huge global challenges it faced in the area of women's empowerment. The new Office of the Under-Secretary-General should also be adequately staffed. Resources should be transparently assigned and utilized to reflect the common priorities of all Member States, bearing in mind the universal, neutral and representative character of UN Women.

51. Although the percentage of the funding for UN Women that came from the regular budget was intentionally small, it was very important for ensuring intergovernmental participation in and strategic oversight of the Entity's normative functions and processes. The Committee should keep the issue under constant review and guard against the unintended dilution of the General Assembly's role in overseeing the normative processes of UN Women.

52. **Ms. Smith** (Norway), recalling that Norway had been an active proponent of gender equality and women's empowerment for decades, said that the establishment of UN Women would undoubtedly strengthen the capacity of the whole United Nations family to advance those goals. It would also promote greater coordination and coherence. The new Entity should be more than the sum of its predecessors; it needed to be a stronger advocate and more efficient agent of change, both globally and at the country level. It should supply the missing links between normative human rights frameworks and operational activities and should identify clear goals, focusing its results-based reporting on impact, not merely output. Member States, meanwhile, should deliver on their own commitments and obligations with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment, which in many cases might require domestic policy changes.

53. In considering the regular budget funding of UN Women, it was important to take into account that it was a composite entity incorporating some United Nations Secretariat functions. Norway supported the proposed use of a grant modality to implement the regular budget resources. That option had been successfully used by UNHCR for many years and, given the hybrid nature of UN Women, would enhance transparency in the administration of its budgetary resources. Norway expected that a stronger focus on results-based management and reporting procedures would contribute to a more cost-effective use of the Entity's resources. Lastly, in view of its ambitious mandate, which would require predictable and sustainable funding, UN Women should strengthen its efforts to broaden the base of contributing countries.

54. **Ms. Bachelet** (Under-Secretary-General for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), expressing her gratitude to all Member States for their support, said that UN Women would abide by the principles of universality, national ownership and equitable geographical representation and would conduct its activities on the basis of transparency, accountability, coherence and coordination. She would personally work to ensure that the Entity maintained a constructive relationship with its Executive Board and the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.